

***“I don’t think people quit cold turkey very easily, even if they stop using their drug. Dahlia’s conflict is shown this way because it’s more realistic.”***

***—Dmitry Lipkin, Creator, THE RICHES***

### **ENTERTAINMENT MATTERS**

A Q&A with Dmitry Lipkin  
by David Michael Conner

FX President John Landgraf called THE RICHES “a ‘family show,’ albeit one featuring a family unlike any television viewers have seen before.” How would you describe your show?

**Dmitry Lipkin:**  
**THE RICHES is THE SOPRANOS meets THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES. It’s a show about outsiders, and through their perspective we experience America and see how we live in a whole new light.**

DC: The Malloy family is a clan that has made its living traveling around conning people, and performing other illegal activities—and yet they seem like good-natured people overall. This is an especially interesting setup for **Minnie Driver’s** character, Dahlia Malloy, who has been showing using an array of illegal and prescription medications. How do you think the way

THE RICHES presents Dahlia deals with the criminal-versus-human aspect of drug abuse?

**DL: All aspects of drug abuse are by nature human, even though drug use may be criminal. Dahlia is someone who is wired for freedom, she’s a traveler. When she was arrested and thrown in jail, that experience really scarred her – even more so than your average lawbreaker. She needed some way to cope with the trauma of being held in a 12 by 12 jail cell for two years, and that’s where her drug use comes from: to escape the confines of prison.**

DC: Of all her drug use, Dahlia’s methamphetamine use seems to be the greatest struggle for her. How did meth come to be such a big part of Dahlia’s story?

**DL: Meth is a very prevalent drug in Middle America, especially in rural and suburban America. It’s very**



strong, very potent, extremely addictive, and it's everywhere and it's cheap. Meth was readily available in jail so that's the drug she got hooked on.

***“That’s the goal—not to show these people and say look at how weird they are, but rather to show how deep down they’re just like us.”***

DC: Dahlia seems to maintain an ongoing struggle with her addiction, but seems to be working toward recovery slowly—that is, more realistically—instead of simply “going cold-turkey” and moving on. Why have you chosen to show Dahlia’s conflict this way?

DL: I don’t think people quit cold turkey very easily, even if they stop using their drug. Dahlia’s conflict is shown this way because it’s more realistic. Drugs are something people use to deal with trauma in life, and if that trauma continues, they’ll keep using. Even though Dahlia’s released from jail, her trauma has never been resolved. She’s now placed in a new foreign environment (Eden Falls) that’s hard for her to adjust to just as much as jail was. She wants to quit but she’s always tempted by those things that worked to cope with the trauma in jail.

DC: Will Dahlia continue her recovery efforts in the second season? What other new battles will she face?

DL: Yes, she will continue her recovery efforts. She will cope with new battles that have to do with living in a foreign place. And she will face

battles that have to do with her past in jail.

DC: THE RICHES has taken on many other social issues besides drug use, including especially socioeconomic struggles in today’s America and the youngest Malloy child, Sam, has a proclivity for cross-dressing. The show seems to address these issues with a unique balance of light humor and very serious attention to how these things affect the characters personally. Critics have overwhelmingly responded positively to these unique characterizations. How do you feel addressing such taboo topics on television might affect your viewers’ perceptions?

DL: The show portrays people who may not necessarily be the Norman Rockwell family, but it shows them in a very positive light. The goal is for the audience to identify with people who may not necessarily be like them,



but with whom they share basic characteristics – they love each other, want what’s best for family, want to be happy, want to stay together, they’re searching just like everybody else for their purpose in life.

The goal is for the audience to identify with these aspects of the characters. They’re crossing all these taboos, but they’re really like us. That’s the goal—not to show these people and say look at how weird they are, but rather to show how deep down they’re just like us.

DC: Is affecting perceptions or informing/enlightening viewers a goal of THE RICHES, or is entertainment and artistic merit the only priority? Can you explain why you feel the way you do about this?

DL: I’d like to think that if the show is entertaining and has artistic merit, that will de facto affect viewer perceptions and help inform/enlighten them.

DC: Can you give us any clues about what new challenges will face the Malloys (aka the Riches) in the second season?

DL: The Malloys will face many obstacles from the outside as well as from within the family itself. The fabric of family will be threatened to a much greater extent this year than last season.

Keep up with THE RICHES online at [www.fxnetworks.com](http://www.fxnetworks.com).

For more Entertainment Matters, go to [www.eiconline.org](http://www.eiconline.org).



**THE RICHES will return for its second season on FX in 2008.**